

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 01054 201221Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /072 W
-----078842 210343Z /14

R 201214Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2231
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

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USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, UK
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER DISCUSSES ELECTION TIMING

SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN HAS TOLD
JOURNALISTS THAT HE WILL DECIDE IN LATE SUMMER WHETHER
TO CALL GENERAL ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER OR WAIT UNTIL 1979.
IN MEANTIME, HE PLANS NO CABINET CHANGES. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. A SPATE OF AUTHORITATIVE-SOUNDING BUT UNATTRIBUTED
STORIES IN SEVERAL BRITISH NEWSPAPERS EARLY THIS WEEK
STATED THAT PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN HAS DECIDED AGAINST
CALLING A GENERAL ELECTION THIS SPRING AND WILL DECIDE
TOWARD THE END OF THE SUMMER WHETHER TO GO TO THE POLLS

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IN OCTOBER OR DELAY UNTIL NEXT YEAR. (ELECTIONS MUST
BE HELD BY NOVEMBER 1979.) HE IS ALSO REPORTED AS PLAN-
NING NO CHANGE IN CABINET MEMBERSHIP.

2. AMONG THE CONSIDERATIONS CITED AS AFFECTING THE
DECISION ON ELECTION TIMING IS WHETHER THE MINORITY
LABOR GOVERNMENT COULD CONTINUE TO COUNT ON SUPPORT FROM

THE LIBERALS (SHOULD THEIR SPECIAL ASSEMBLY JANUARY 21
FORCE AN END TO THE LIB-LAB PACT), SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS
(AFTER DEVOLUTION FOR SCOTLAND IS PASSED BY PARLIAMENT),
AND ULSTER UNIONISTS (AFTER THE SPEAKER'S CONFERENCE
RECOMMENDS ADDITIONAL NORTHERN IRELAND CONSTITUENCIES).
HE IS SAID TO BELIEVE THAT THE EXPECTED INCREASE IN THE
RATE OF INFLATION AFTER MID-YEAR WILL NOT BE SHARP
ENOUGH TO DAMAGE LABOR'S ELECTORAL PROSPECTS.
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3. A MEMBER OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S STAFF CONFIRMED TO
US THAT CALLAGHAN ORIGINALLY MADE REMARKS ALONG ABOVE
LINES ON AN UNATTRIBUTABLE BASIS TO ONE CORRESPONDENT
DURING THE FLIGHT BACK FROM THE PM'S TRIP TO SOUTH
ASIA. WANTING TO AVOID THE ADVERSE REACTION OF OTHER
NEWSPAPERS TO THIS APPARENT FAVORITISM THE PM'S PRESS
SECRETARY, TOM MCCAFFREY, REPEATED THE PM'S VIEWS
PROMPTLY AFTER RETURNING TO LONDON AT A BRIEFING FOR
PARLIAMENTARY LOBBY JOURNALISTS, WHICH ARE ALSO CON-
DUCTED ON NONATTRIBUTABLE BASIS.

BREWSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, ELECTIONS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON01054
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780032-0051
Format: TEL
From: LONDON USEEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780141/aaaabici.tel
Line Count: 84
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: da21c7e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3741800
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIME MINISTER DISCUSSES ELECTION TIMING SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN HAS TOLD JOURNALISTS THAT HE WILL DECIDE IN LATE SUMMER WHE
TAGS: PINT, SOPN, UK, (CALLAGHAN, JAMES)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/da21c7e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014